



**QUABBIN REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT**  
**School Committee Meeting**

**MINUTES – May 14, 2009**

**EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT CENTER**

**SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING – CALLED TO ORDER: 7:35 p.m.**

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Edward Leonard, with the following School Committee members present:

1. Attendance:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Dr. Richard Allan [arrived at 7:46 pm] | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Robert Dupuis       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> [open]  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Charles Miller      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Therese Salvadore                                 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Paula Bolger        |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mark Brophy                            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Lee Wolanin         |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ned Kelly                              | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Dr. Thomas Tashjian |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Timothy Williams                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Peggy Thompson                 |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Edward F. Leonard                      | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cheryl Wolfe        |

2. Administration:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/>                                | <input type="checkbox"/> Susanne Musnicki                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Clare Barnes                   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Jason Newton         |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Robert Berlo        | <input type="checkbox"/> Joan Paula                      |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> William Burnett     | <input type="checkbox"/> Mark Pellegrino                 |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cheryl Duval        | <input type="checkbox"/> Debbie Pelley                   |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Martha Femino       | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Marilyn Tencza       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tracey Hippert                 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Jan Williams         |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Anthony DiBenedetto | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Patricia Worthington |

3. QRTA Representative – Greg Devine   
Student Representative –

4. News Media:  
Worcester T&G – Craig Semon   
Barre Gazette –Ellie Downer

5. Visitors/Faculty: Don Lacharite  
Stephanie Carpenter, Woods Public Library  
Lester W. Paquin, Woods Public Library  
Sgt. Robert J. Deschenes, Barre Police Dept.  
Marty Goulet, New Braintree Selectboard  
Tom McCaffrey, Oakham Fire Dept.  
Donald Haapakoski, Oakham Police Dept.  
Lisa Hyball, Oakham Finance Comm.  
Richard Wheeler, Barre DPW  
Chris Lisee, Barre Fire Dept.  
Dennis Letendre, New Braintree Fire Dept.  
Rich Jankauskus, Barre Selectman  
Joe Rogowski, Barre Fire Chief  
Peg Frost, Barre Board of Health  
Bert DuVernay, New Braintree Police Chief  
Edward Pollack, Hardwick Police Dept.  
Matthew Chrobak, Barre Fire Dept.  
Scott Sheridan, Barre, parent  
Sam Lipson, Barre resident  
Magi Ziff, New Braintree Selectboard  
Richard T. Ayer, New Braintree Highway Superintendent  
Robert G. Goodfield, Hardwick Fire Chief  
Michael G. Howe, Hardwick Highway Surveyor  
Bob Bagdonas, Hardwick Fire Dept.  
Michael Sweet, Hardwick Police Dept.  
Kathy Howard, Barre Police Dept.

Carol Sullivan, Barre Police Dept.  
 Erik Demetropoulos, Barre Police Chief  
 Stanley Andriski, Barre Fire Dept.  
 Brian Inman, Barre Fincom

**SECTION II: MINUTES**

	<u>Motion</u>	<u>2<sup>nd</sup></u>	<u>For</u>	<u>Opp.</u>	<u>Abs.</u>
Voted: To accept and place on file the minutes of April 9, 2009.	MB	LW	11	0	0
Voted: To accept and place on file the minutes of April 28, 2009 Special School Committee meeting.	MB	NK	10	0	1

**SECTION III: WARRANTS/REPORTS**

Payroll and accounts payable warrants # 22 and 23 were presented and were previously signed.

**SECTION IV: ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS**

1. SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS:  
 Acting Superintendent Duval noted that all monthly reports from Administrators and Principals were sent electronically to school committee members last week for review.
2. DIRECTOR OF ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES: Payroll and accounts payable warrants #22 and 23 were presented and were previously signed.
3. TEACHER ADVISORY: Greg Devine was present and stated that on behalf of the QRTA, he welcomed Cheryl Duval as Acting Superintendent and voiced his support for her in that role.

**SECTION V: SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS**

1. ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW SUBCOMMITTEE – Mark Brophy stated that this subcommittee met on May 11, 2009 regarding the search for a Superintendent. Senator Brewer was in attendance and spoke for about an hour in strong support of sharing resources with other districts. Ideas were shared about further consolidating with other districts, searching from talent pools and expanded resources. Mr. Brophy stated that the school committee, on behalf of the district, wishes to keep an educationally sound, taxpayer-friendly approach to our schools. Chairman Leonard stated that the idea of shared resources has been discussed for more than a year and that Senator Brewer’s reinforcement of sharing resources indicates that these discussions should be held in the immediate future. The state is looking for district leaders who can provide feedback on the success of sharing resources within districts. Mr. Brophy stated that the subcommittee would like to continue the search and specifically, to look at this type of opportunity. Dr. Allan suggested that the district needs to be careful, prudent, smart about sharing resources, as the economic outlook for the next few years is bleak. Dr. Allan stated that more emphasis needs to be placed on virtual online courses, such as the one that QRTA President Greg Devine teaches. Dr. Allan stated that at the national and state level, the government is excited about the opportunity to share resources, and was glad that Chairman Leonard had arranged for Senator Brewer to be present at the meeting earlier this week. Dr. Tashjian also spoke about shared resources and stated that about one year ago, discussion was held about restructuring education and in looking at sharing programs between districts. This would yield immediate payoffs and benefits for the students and district alike. Ned Kelly also spoke and said that in the meeting with Senator Brewer, he indicated that no tax revenues would be increasing until about 2014, and that would only bring the levels back to where they originally were. Mr. Kelly stated that he mentioned to Senator Brewer that the regulations at the state level are “tying the district’s hands”. Senator Brewer asked for examples and Mr. Kelly said the 180-day school year and certain number of hours are some issues. Senator Brewer asked Mr. Kelly and those in attendance to let him know what bothers them and he will work to assist with those issues. Charlie Miller stated that in order to help close the revenue gap, the state should become a more enticing place for business owners.
2. ALTERNATIVE FUNDING ADHOC SUBCOMMITTEE – Cheryl Wolfe had nothing new to report.
3. AUDIT/CENTRAL OFFICE SUBCOMMITTEE—Lee Wolanin stated that he will set up a meeting in the next week or two for this committee to meet. The subcommittee needs to address the limited number of school choice student seats vs. the number of students seeking school choice status.
4. BARRE BUILDING SUBCOMMITTEE – Lee Wolanin stated that there was nothing new to report at this time.

5. BUDGET SUBCOMMITTEE – Mark Brophy asked Acting Superintendent Duval to speak about the budget. Acting Superintendent Duval stated that the Ways and Means budget came out on Wednesday and showed a deficit of \$365,662 in projected revenue sources. The House budget then increased the budget by \$138,350 for Chapter 70 funds and also increased the Chapter 71 funds by \$321,000. However, Chapter 70 monies were not held harmless as previously anticipated, and the Chapter 70 funds were then decreased by \$346,514. The Senate releases their budget next week. Acting Superintendent Duval has emailed Senator Brewer seeking his support and he has indicated that he will prepare an amendment bill to support regular transportation. At the present time, this leaves the district with a deficit of \$712,000. The Administrators will be meeting with the Principals next week to look at areas that may be further cut within their budgets. Dr. Allan asked for clarification of the numbers and was told that the district is \$712,000 short of making up the \$50,000 deficit from last year's budget.
6. COLLECTIVE BARGAINING SUBCOMMITTEE –
7. POLICY, REVIEW AND REFORM SUBCOMMITTEE –Dr. Allan stated that this subcommittee will meet on the 1<sup>st</sup> Monday in October.
8. PLANTS & FACILITIES SUBCOMMITTEE – Ned Kelly stated that he would request the appointment of both the Oakham Roof committee and the QRMHS roof committee as well. (See Action Item Nos. 1 and 2 below for details). Next, Acting Superintendent Duval stated that she has had communication with the MSBA regarding the Initial Compliance Certificate (ICC) for the Oakham roof. This document must be signed by the Superintendent, the School Committee Chair and the Town Selectboard Chair. Nothing within the ICC must be changed, however Acting Superintendent Duval stated that in paragraph 8, it refers to authorization by the school and because the building is a town building, it must indicate so. Ms. Sullivan of the MSBA has stated that she has worked with regional districts before (whose buildings were owned by the towns) and stated that an inter-municipal contract will be set up for the same. Next, Acting Superintendent Duval made a funding request that monies be transferred to pay for an Owner's Project Manager (OPM) and Engineering Study for the QRMHS project. (See Action Item No. 3 below for details). Charlie Miller asked if the amount stated (10%) was of the total project cost, or for each project. Acting Superintendent Duval stated it was for each project, so the price shown would be doubled. Dr. Tashjian asked what follow-up information came from the structural engineer regarding the safety of the QRMHS roof and Chairman Leonard stated that the engineer's letter stated that the roof is structurally sound for now, but should be re-examined in one year. Project length is expected to be about 16-18 months.
9. SPECIAL EDUCATION SUBCOMMITTEE – Dr. Tashjian stated that no meetings have been held since Chair Susan Benedict resigned on March 11, 2009. Dr. Tashjian stated that Jason Newton, Director of Special Services, has done a fantastic job of aggressively working on and securing savings for the district with regard to the SPED program. Chairman Leonard confirmed that next month is the re-organizational meeting.
10. TECHNOLOGY SUBCOMMITTEE – Therese Salvadore was absent from the meeting.

#### **SECTION VI: UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

New Braintree Selectboard member Marty Goulet asked if the FY09 Chapter 70 money could be made whole with stimulus funds. Acting Superintendent Duval stated that there is a process that needs to be followed in order to secure any stimulus funds. Grants must be written and filed, and separate records must be kept for monies that can be replaced by stimulus funds vs. those that cannot, as there are very specific areas that monies can be attributed to only. The district will be looking closely at what areas can be restored with those funds.

Sgt. Rob Deschenes was present and stated that the Barre Finance Committee has asked the Police Department to make further cuts to their budget in the amount of 4%. Sgt. Deschenes asked if the school committee has come to the realization that perhaps some school employees will need to be laid off as well. Sgt. Deschenes asked if the Central Office could be shut down for a while or offices moved to a different location to try to realize a cost savings. Sgt. Deschenes noted that everyone in attendance has the same economic need, and while education is very important, the town services that support the district are equally as important.

Chairman Leonard stated that as he had mentioned in a previous meeting, the district has cut 38 positions over the last 5 budget cycles. The district has tried to accommodate the towns in their assessments, however, in some cases the number of students per class has increased. Chairman Leonard reiterated that the district is awaiting numbers from the state, but noted that certainly additional sacrifices will need to be made by the district. Chairman Leonard further noted that the percentage of the town budget that the school budget requires is decreasing.

Sgt. Deschenes asked if the assessment is above or below what the state mandates the towns must pay. Acting

Superintendent Duval stated that the value is calculated through a formula sent out by the Department of Revenue and that the towns in the district pay more than the minimum local contribution, however those figures are less than what the Department of Education declares the “target level” should be for amount spent per pupil.

Sgt. Deschenes stated that a 3.9% assessment would equate to \$84,000 and would save Barre police positions for another year.

Chairman Leonard stated that the district will be \$700,000+ short in a few days, and much like the town services, the district has an obligation to provide services for the students in our district.

Sgt. Deschenes wished to thank Mark Brophy for his honest and upfront approach in speaking with the towns, and said that he is an asset to the School Committee. Mr. Brophy thanked Sgt. Deschenes.

Marty Goulet stated that some excellent comments were made by Dr. Allan and Mark Brophy, but also remarked that change is needed in this budget year, FY09, as well as in FY10. Mr. Goulet questioned why, if the SPED director stated at the last meeting, he would not need nearly one-half of a million dollars, the town assessments were still impacted negatively. Mr. Goulet said that irresponsible decisions were made. Mr. Goulet also commented on the fact that the salary of six Administrator positions is shown to be in excess of \$600,000. Mr. Goulet said that the School Committee is not listening to the needs of the towns and is simply giving them “more of the same”, and is crippling the towns in the process. In New Braintree, there is nowhere else to cut from. He asked the board to look at cuts that must be made. Mark Brophy assured Mr. Goulet that the School Committee will be responding and first must receive state numbers and follow the procedure to ensure that all avenues to save money are examined.

Kathy Howard of the Barre Police Dept. asked Chairman Leonard to address Mr. Goulet’s question about why there are six Administrators paid more than \$100,000 each, and Chairman Leonard stated that when the district was evaluated by the NAESC, Quabbin was cited for having insufficient Administrators. Chairman Leonard also stated that as a \$35 million “business” we must report to the state every 1 ½ days with information, and although sharing positions is a possibility, the district needs to ensure that the proper number of employees are hired to support those positions. Chairman Leonard stated that these are extremely difficult and threatening times, and that for a reasonable amount of money, the district delivers a good quality of product. The district is in the bottom 6% for relying on tax support and in the bottom 10% in terms of salary for Administrators.

Burt DuVernay, the New Braintree Police Chief spoke about regionalizing and mutual aid efforts and said that this is something that is already being done, so it is not a new concept.

Joe Rogowski, Barre Fire Chief asked if 38 employees had been taken off of the payroll completely or if they were instead moved to other areas. Chairman Leonard said most of the employees had been removed from the payroll, however, some were moved to other positions and the “other” position was eliminated. Additionally, some removals were due to retirements.

Sam Lipson, Barre resident, asked if 38 employees were “laid off”, how much money would that reduce the budget by? Chairman Leonard stated that because it was done over a period of several years, they would work to get the answer for him. Mr. Lipson also asked what the school pays toward the retirement program. Acting Superintendent Duval will look up that information as well.

Marty Goulet asked how much has been factored into the FY10 budget toward raises? Chairman Leonard stated that the committee cannot disclose amounts since they are currently in contract negotiations and it would jeopardize the collective bargaining process, but Chairman Leonard did say that the unions they have worked with so far have been “very, very reasonable” and they understand the state of our economy at the present time.

Rich Jankauskus, Barre Selectboard Chair questioned about whether the formula would be changing for next year and Acting Superintendent Duval stated that the state is in its 3<sup>rd</sup> year of the formula, which is due to end in FY11. At that time, there will be a significant increase in the minimum contribution level from towns. Mr. Jankauskus continued on to say that he would invite other DPW Superintendents in the room to speak, but that from his standpoint, many days would be missed from school next year if the Highway Dept. lost many employees. Typical two-hour delays would like become full snow day closings.

Hardwick DPW Surveyor Michael Howe stated that he too will see drastic cuts in the number of employees and will be forced to not be able to open up roads in time for school. Chairman Leonard suggested that these types of discussions continue going forward.

Stephanie Carpenter of the Woods Public Library stated that the library will be conducting furloughs to keep the library doors open and asked if the School Committee would consider the same. Chairman Leonard stated that the committee would certainly be looking at the numbers, but realizing that with furloughs, no education is happening.

School Committee member Lee Wolanin spoke to the DPW Superintendents and said that as a committee, our “hands are tied” by the state. The state requires the 180 days, and for the most part, will not grant any waivers. This was understood during the recent December ice storms in 2008, when a group of Superintendents asked the state to grant them a waiver of the 180-day rule, based on the extreme circumstances in our districts and the state refused to do so. As a result, the district shortened February vacation and had April vacation in reserve if needed. Mr. Wolanin reminded all in attendance that the school committee members are all townspeople who pay taxes in the district as well. The emergency services in the towns are great and Mr. Wolanin has had to use them all at one time or another. He would not want to see anyone lose their job. He encouraged all to contact our state senators and to encourage them to file amendments that would assist our district.

Sgt. Deschenes asked Chairman Leonard if furloughs could be done when school is not in session and Chairman Leonard said that is not an option because employees are paid based on the number of actual days worked.

Barre Police Chief Erik Demetropoulos asked if teachers took on extra classes, would they be paid separately for those classes? Chairman Leonard said that the teachers contracts specify their exact workload.

Barre Fire Chief Joe Rogowski stated that regionalization and mutual aid is not working well because the towns cannot reciprocate the assistance. With further budget cuts, buildings will burn down because he does not have the man power to battle them. The Chief is concerned that he will not adequately be able to protect the schools with a limited number of staff and this not only effects the schools, but the community in general.

Sgt. Deschenes stated that he also fears the Barre Police Dept., if further cut, will not be able to adequately protect the schools. He stated that the State Police have said they will assist to the extent that they can, but they are equally strapped for help. In this economy, domestic assaults, restraining orders and assault and battery crimes are increasing. The issue of liability when no police officers are able to respond is a reality. The police department is looking at eliminating shifts to keep officers employed.

School Committee member Robert Dupuis spoke and said that as a committee, they hear the public and their cries for help. Bob said he is asking the Quabbin School District to start a grassroots campaign tonight, a voting collaborative and he challenged those in attendance to secure 5 phone numbers and email addresses of names that would be willing to help form this collaborative. Bob said he would coordinate the information, do the marketing, etc. Mr. Dupuis stated that unless we all vote, the situation will only get worse.

Tom McCaffrey of the Oakham Fire Dept. stated that he understands that the budget is fixed after it is passed. He also stated that there was a spending freeze at this time last year, and in November, they got a “red light” again. At this point, they are only making vehicle repairs and they are in dire straights like everyone else.

Kathy Howard of the Barre Police Dept. asked if the public could hear what the cost was to run the Central Office at the next meeting. Chairman Leonard said yes.

Rich Jankauskus, Barre Highway Dept. stated that he has sat in on the Collective Bargaining meetings as the 5-town representative and he complimented the committee on the impressive way they have conducted those meetings. He especially liked that there was no need for lawyers to become involved, thereby saving legal expenses. Marty Goulet thanked Rich for serving as the town representative.

Sam Lipson, Barre resident suggested that in the future, the schools should open their facilities to hold town meetings to encourage more residents to attend. Oftentimes, the town hall locations are too small and frequently residents do not attend because of a lack of space. Chairman Leonard stated that most towns already hold their town meetings in the schools. Mark Brophy stated that schools in the northeast are not climate-controlled and suggested that geothermal ways to cool schools should be examined. If the schools had air conditioning and were climate-controlled, districts could follow the days and hours required without issue and it would change the face of education.

Chairman Leonard stated that he was grateful to everyone who was present tonight, and invited anyone with further questions or ideas to contact Acting Superintendent Duval, Mark Brophy or himself.

**SECTION VII: SCHOOL COMMITTEE CONCERNS**

**SECTION VIII: NEW BUSINESS**

1. School Improvement Plans were sent electronically last week to all members for their review, and have been “hard-copied” for Dr. Allan and Ned Kelly, who are without email capabilities, in tonight’s packet.
2. Custodial Bids were read and acted upon (see Action Item No. 4 below for further details).

**SECTION IX: ACTION ITEMS**

	<u>Motion</u>	<u>2<sup>nd</sup></u>	<u>For</u>	<u>Opp.</u>	<u>Abs.</u>
1. Motion made that the School Committee appoint the Members to the Oakham Roof Committee as listed in the May 14, 2009 letter to Diane Sullivan of the MSBA. [List attached hereto].	NK	RA	10	0	1
2. Motion made that the School Committee appoint the Members to the QRMHS Roof Committee as listed on the document entitled QRMHS Roof Building Committee. The list will be updated to include Charles Miller’s name as a School Committee Member. [List attached hereto].	NK	RA	10	0	1
3. Motion made to request that funds from the school choice fund account to be used in hiring an Owner’s Project Manager (OPM) and to conduct an engineering study for the QRMHS roof project.	NK	LW	11	0	0
4. Motion made to award custodial supply bids to three companies as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Industrial Cleaning Products in the amount of \$37,504.00;</li> <li>▪ Alpine Industrial in the amount of \$15,834.53; and to</li> <li>▪ Central Poly Corporation in the amount of \$8,807</li> </ul>	MB	NK	10	0	1

**SECTION X: EXECUTIVE SESSION** *Not necessary*

**TIME:**

**PURPOSE:**

- To discuss the reputation, character, physical condition or mental health rather than the professional competence of an individual.
  - To consider the discipline or dismissal of, or to hear complaints or charges brought against, a public officer, employee, staff member.
  - To discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining process.
  - To discuss the deployment of security personnel or devices.
  - To investigate charges of criminal misconduct or to discuss the filing of criminal complaints.
  - To consider the purchase, exchange, lease or value of real property.
  - To comply with the provisions of any general or special law or federal grant-in-aid requirements.
- Mass. Gen. Laws Ch. 39, 23 (1)-(7).

**MOTION:** \_\_\_\_\_ ; **SECOND:** \_\_\_\_\_ ;

**VOTE:** RA ; MB ; CM ; PB ; LW ; NK ; CW   
 RD ; TW ; *[open]* ; PT ; TS ; TT ; EL

Return to Open Session – Time: \_\_\_\_\_ p.m.

**MOTION:** \_\_\_\_\_ **SECOND:** \_\_\_\_\_ **VOTE:** \_\_\_\_\_ **FOR:** \_\_\_\_\_ **OPPOSED:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Meeting adjourned:** 9:05 p.m.

**MOTION:** RA **SECOND:** LW **VOTE:** 11 **FOR:** 11 **OPPOSED:** 0

Respectfully submitted,  
 Melissa A. Widing, Executive Assistant